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## ABSTRACT

Communication patterns of foreign immigrants in the process of acculturation are conceptualized on cognitive and behavioral levels. The cognitive level is observed in the complexity of an immigrant's perception of the host society; the behavioral level, in the immigrant's involvement in the host society through interpersonal and mass communication. Three causal factors are identified as major determinants of the immigrant's communication patterns: language competence, acculturation motivation, and accessibility to host communication channels. Nine propositions are offered which explain the relationship among the three causal factors, behavioral participation in host communication channels, and cognitive structure in perceiving the host society. The theory was tested and supported by a survey of 400 randomly selected Korean immigrants in the Chicago area. (Author/AA)

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A CAUSAL MODEL OF COMMUNICATION PATTERNS  
OF FOREIGN IMMIGRANTS IN THE PROCESS OF ACCULTURATION

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As foreign immigrants move from one culture to another, behavioral modes and values in the old setting may prove maladaptive in the new. Many aspects of life are unfamiliar to them, and they are faced with a high degree of uncertainty -- probably highest at the initial stage and then gradually reduced as time passes. Sooner or later, immigrants come to understand better the norms and values, and to adopt salient reference groups of the host society. This phenomenon is commonly called "acculturation." Acculturation has been defined as "...the change in individuals whose primary learning has been in one culture and who take over traits from another culture (Marden & Meyer, 1968, 36)."

Communication is crucial to acculturation. It provides the fundamental means by which individuals develop insights into their new environment. The importance of communication as the acculturation medium was postulated as early as 1931 by Sapir who stated that "...every cultural pattern and every single act of social behavior involves communication in either an explicit or implicit sense"(78). Mendelsohn also pointed out that communication, together with education, is regarded as being charged with the task of "...merging the minority groups into one democratic social organization

of commonly shared ideas and values (1964, 31)."

The present study attempted to investigate the acculturation process of foreign immigrants through their communication patterns. The underlying assumption was that the extent to which members of an ethnic group are acculturated will depend, at least partially, on the extent to which they participate in the communication channels of the host society. As Shibutani and Kwan have argued, culture, after all, is a result of consensus and a "...perspective shared by members of a group (1965, 575)."

#### PROBLEM

Communication scholars have traditionally tended not to investigate the communication aspects of acculturation. A few studies dealing with communication among immigrants have been made in the area of anthropology and sociology in which communication variables assumed an incidental role. In anthropological studies, a communication system is postulated to facilitate the acculturation flow between the two contacting cultures. In sociological studies, communication behaviors of foreigners have been included as an indicator of "social integration" or a factor which is positively associated with the "majority-minority" relations. General agreements among these studies are: (1) immigrants who tend to seek interpersonal relationships with Americans in social situations have not only a greater potential but also actually achieve a higher level of acculturation (Spindler & Goldschmidt, 1952; Weinstock, 1964; James, 1961; Johnston,

1963; Ossenberrg, 1964; Graves, 1967), and (2) the use of American mass media is positively related to the immigrant's acculturation (DeFleur & Cho, 1957; Richmond, 1967; Graves, 1967).

Only recently, two studies by researchers in communication have explored the communication patterns of ethnic individuals. Nagata(1969) demonstrated differences in interpersonal and mass communication behaviors among first, second, and third-generation Japanese Americans. Chang (1972) reported some differences in mass media behavior among three groups of Korean immigrants ("cultural assimilation group," "bicultural group," and "nativistic group") distinctive in the patterns of change in cultural values. The two studies basically reinforced the findings from the earlier studies describing individual and inter-generational differences in communication patterns within an ethnic group.

Although these studies provide considerable evidence regarding the positive contribution of communication to the general acculturation process, the findings are limited to descriptions of the overt communication behaviors. No systematic attempt has yet been made to provide a theoretical explanation for the communication behaviors. Such vital questions as why certain individuals display greater participation in the communication channels of the host society and how such participation affects the general acculturation process, particularly in the cognitive structure of the immigrants, have not been examined.

Focusing on such research needs as pointed out above, the present investigator has attempted to develop a causal theory through which the following questions are answered:

1. Why do certain immigrants interact with members of the host society to a greater extent than others?
2. Why do certain immigrants use the host mass media to a greater extent than others?
3. Why do certain immigrants perceive the host society more accurately and realistically than others?
4. What relationships exist between an immigrant's interpersonal communication and mass media behaviors and his cognitive perception of the host society?

#### THEORY

The theory consists of nine interrelated propositions regarding the communication patterns of the foreign immigrants. The available evidence in sociological, anthropological, and psychological literature regarding human communication and information processing were incorporated in developing the present theoretical system. The development of the theory is discussed in the following in two parts. First, the relationship between one's communication behaviors and cognitive structure is considered. Second, causal antecedents of intercultural communication behaviors and cognitive structure are identified. The two parts are, then, combined into a causal model of communication.

### Perceptual Change

The first insight into the importance of the perceptual domain in acculturation studies was made by the Social Science Research Council (1954) which defined acculturation as " ...a matter of range of presentation and of perceptual reality"(993). The relevance of perception in acculturation was also recognized by Chance (1965), who viewed acculturation as " ...a change of the individual's perception, attitudes, cognition" (386).

Immigrants are faced with a certain degree of ambiguity much like individuals moving from one place to another within the same country. They must find ways to make sense out of their new environment in order to adapt to it. They try to categorize events and people into certain molds; thus, cultural stereotypes become salient as screening devices when immigrants need to maintain the easiest and most economical structure in their perception of unfamiliar people and the social milieu. For example, a new immigrant may believe that Americans are all friendly and free. Others may believe the opposite, that they are unfriendly and their freedom is sometimes restricted.

Given time, however, the immigrant generally adopts new perceptual categories and will comprehend perspectives wider and more complex than his initial stereotypes. Curiosity, searching out of necessity, and going beyond the customary are ways in which these perceptual networks can be further differentiated, refined, and organized into a more sensitive information processing system. This tendency toward a more complex perceptual structure is supported by the literature on cognitive systems, in which simplicity-complexity in one's cognitive structure

is not viewed as an additional aspect of "personality" -- for example, a "trait," but viewed as dependent upon developmental conditions. Schroder, Driver, and Streufert (1967) asserted that the level of cognitive complexity in a given area is not necessarily static over time. Accordingly, an immigrant's differentiated view of the host society is a product of life experiences from multi-dimensional perspectives in the host society, while more global and unidimensional stereotypes are indicative of lack of insights in the host society at the initial stage of immigration.

In the present study, cognitive complexity is defined as the extent of cultural knowledge and familiarity with all segments of the host society. This includes the group's institutions and sub-groups, the attitudes, beliefs, and values of the members, and the reciprocal role requirements within the group and between group members and non-members. Such knowledge of the culture of a structurally complex group can never be complete, even in the case of a life-long member of the group. The newcomer's degree of knowledge can be judged only in relative terms.

Cognitive structure is an important communication variable because it allows the immigrant to perceive many goals and the means to their attainment. It provides a more adequate means of relating the immigrant to the host society. In communication terms, the "discrepancy" between the intention of a sender (or host society) and the meaning of the messages to a perceiver (or an ethnic member) will be reduced. One's perceptual structure should, therefore, be the most important mechanism through which he will pursue the goal of better acculturation in the host society.

The role of intercultural communication in the development of an immigrant's perception of the host society is apparent when one considers that any form of cultural learning occurs through communication in one form or another. As Peterson, Jensen, and Rivers (1965) pointed out:

Communication is....the carrier of the social process. It is the means man has for organizing, stabilizing, and modifying his social life....The social process depends upon the accumulation, exchange, and transmission of knowledge. Knowledge in turn depends upon communication (16).

Thus, the growth of a differentiated view of the host society will be facilitated by the accumulation of the immigrant's communication experiences.

Among many forms of human communication, interpersonal communication and mass media consumption are the two most salient forms in cultural learning process. Through the two major channels of intercultural communication, immigrants can learn and comprehend wider and more differentiated view of the host society. Other forms of communication such as mere observations of strangers on the street are considered less influential on the immigrant's learning of the host culture. The growth of an immigrant's cognitive complexity in perceiving the host society, therefore, is proposed here primarily the result of the accumulation of his interpersonal communication experiences with members of the host society and exposure to mass media offerings of the host society.

PROPOSITION 1: The more an immigrant participates in interpersonal communication with members of the host society, the more complex will be his perception of the host society.

PROPOSITION 2: The more an immigrant uses mass media of the host society, the more complex will be his perception of the host society.

#### Factors Affecting Differential Intercultural Communication

The next question is why different immigrants engage in different amounts of intercultural communication. Among many factors that may directly or indirectly influence one's communication behaviors are: language competence, acculturation motivation to learn and participate in the host society, and accessibility to the interpersonal and mass communication channels of the host society. In the following discussions, each of the three factors will be explained for its importance in explaining the immigrant's communication behaviors.

The role of the host language in intercultural communication is self-evident since effective cross-cultural communication can take place only when language appropriate to a given society is at least minimally used and comprehended by the immigrant. Studies among foreign students provide considerable empirical support in this regard suggesting a positive correlation between the students' fluency in speaking and understanding English and their association with American friends (See Pool, 1965, for a summary of such studies). The same positive relationship has been found between the language fluency and an immigrant's exposure to the host mass media. Richmond (1967), in his study of Canadian immigrants, reported that "the readership of [Canadian] newspapers and magazines was very closely related to the fluency of the immigrants in either

English or French"(138-9).

From the above evidence, it is postulated that an immigrant's competence in speaking and understanding English facilitates not only his interpersonal interaction with Americans but also his use of the American mass media.

PROPOSITION 3: The more competent an immigrant is in the host language, the greater will be his participation in interpersonal communication with members of the host society.

PROPOSITION 4: The more competent an immigrant is in the host language, the greater will be his use of host mass media.

Secondly, it is postulated that the degree of an immigrant's acculturation motivation will significantly influence his intercultural communication behaviors. Psychologists have generally distinguished between motivation and action -- between the desire to achieve and actual achievement (Atkinson, 1966; McClelland, 1967). Motivations are conceived as the psychological dispositions to strive for certain goals that energize human behavior when the situation arouses the expectancy that performance of an act is instrumental to attainment to the goal. In this study, acculturation motivation is defined simply as the degree of eagerness for an immigrant to learn and participate in the host society.

One's acculturation motivation is viewed conceptually independent from his English competence. An immigrant who is fluent in English may

or may not associate with Americans or use the American mass media depending upon his value orientation, his attitude toward the host society, personality factors such as gregariousness, receptivity to new elements of life, or interest in current affairs in general. Whatever the reason may be, different immigrants do show different levels of acculturation motivation, which will affect their interpersonal and mass communication behaviors.

PROPOSITION 5: The greater an immigrant's acculturation motivation, the greater will be his participation in interpersonal communication with members of the host society.

PROPOSITION 6: The greater an immigrant's acculturation motivation, the greater will be his use of host mass media.

The third factor which is proposed to influence one's intercultural communication behaviors is "accessibility" to host communication channels. The term "accessibility" means, in relation to interpersonal communication, interpersonal "interaction potential," i.e., the degree of opportunity for association with members of the host society provided in one's daily communication environment. For example, a Korean immigrant who works for an American company dealing with Americans has a greater chance to develop more or less meaningful relationships with them than a Korean who owns a Korean grocery store. Accessibility in relation to mass communication is indicated by the availability of the American mass media at home (e.g., radio, TV, subscription to American newspapers and magazines).

An immigrant who has a TV set at home is likely to watch the programs more often than the one who does not. The same pattern is expected in reading newspapers and magazines.

The importance of such environmental factors in intercultural communication has never been closely examined in previous studies. In the present study, accessibility to host communication channels is postulated to be an important factor, along with English competence and motivational factors, in influencing the immigrant's intercultural communication behaviors. No matter how strongly motivated and fluent in English an immigrant is, he will find it difficult to form any meaningful relationship with Americans unless he is provided with some opportunity to approach or to be approached by Americans. Similarly, he will find it difficult to use the American mass media if they are not readily available.

PROPOSITION 7: The greater an immigrant's interpersonal interaction potential, the greater will be his participation in interpersonal communication with members of the host society.

PROPOSITION 8: The more access an immigrant has to host mass media, the greater will be his exposure to host mass media.

So far, it has been suggested that the three factors (language competence, acculturation motivation, and channel accessibility) will contribute to a significant, if not exhaustive, explanation for the differential communication involvement of immigrants with the host society. At the same time, they will influence an immigrant's perceptual

structure indirectly through intercultural communication experiences (See Propositions 1 & 2). One's competence in the host language, acculturation motivation, and accessibility to interpersonal and mass communication channels of the host society will not have any significant effect on his perceptual complexity without some meaningful interpersonal communication experience or consumption of host mass media. Therefore, there will be weak or no direct relationships between the three causal factors and the perceptual pattern of an immigrant.

PROPOSITION 9: The complexity with which an immigrant perceives the host society will be influenced by language competence, acculturation motivation, and channel accessibility, mediated by interpersonal and mass communication experiences.

Proposition 9, together with the other eight propositions, enables one to draw a causal model of intercultural communication-acculturation as described in Figure 1. It needs to be pointed out that the exogenous variables in the path model ( $X_1$ ,  $X_2$ ,  $X_3$ , and  $X_4$ ) may not be totally independent from one another, but co-vary as a group of acculturation indicators. For instance, a person with better English competence may tend to have higher acculturation motivation and have greater access to host communication channels. Similarly, the extent to which an immigrant participates in interpersonal communication in the host society ( $X_5$ ) tends to be positively related to his consumption of the host mass media ( $X_6$ ). Since it is extremely difficult to hypothesize any causal order among these variables, the relationships are taken as given and the causal structure among them is considered unknown. In Figure 1, such positive

relationships are represented by the double-arrowed curves, while the causal order predicted in the nine propositions is represented by the direction of the arrow.

#### METHOD & PROCEDURE

##### The Survey

The nine propositions and the path model were tested through a survey of the Korean population in the Chicago area during July--August, 1975. 400 Korean immigrant households were selected from three available sources--The Korean Directory of Chicago, lists of Korean church members in the area, and the Chicago & Vicinity Telephone Directory. The accepted practice of systematic random sampling was used (Blalock, 1972, 514-16). Any overlapping of the sample was carefully eliminated before the survey.

Due to the widely diffused residential areas of the Korean population, the survey was conducted through mail-questionnaires. Respondents with telephones were called by the investigator and were further encouraged to cooperate. For those who were married, either husband or wife was asked to respond without consulting with his/her spouse. Out of the 400 households, 285 completed questionnaires were returned, a response rate of 70%. Among the 115 non-responses, 52 were due to change of address. After the questionnaires were returned, students and travellers who were staying in the United States only a short period of time were excluded in order to limit the present study to those Koreans who had

at least temporarily decided to immigrate to the United States.

The total number of questionnaires that were actually used in the data analysis was 281.

To test the representativeness of the sample against the total Korean population in the Chicago area, respondents' background characteristics were compared with other available data on the same population. First, the distribution of the number of years the immigrants have lived in the United States was analyzed. It was shown that the average length of stay of the present sample is 4.2 years (standard deviation = 4.0) indicating a rapid increase in the population size during the last seven or eight years. This pattern approximates the increasing number of Koreans who have entered the United States each year since 1950, mostly since 1967, as reported by the United States Office of Immigration and Naturalization Service (1974).

Secondly, the major demographic composition of the sample was compared with the reported statistical data on the Korean population in the Chicago area (Korea Times, 1975). The comparison of the two indicates general agreement between their distributions of occupation, age, and marital status, although a small difference was found in the proportion of the Koreans with an income of more than \$20,000 a year. Such a slight bias in the present sample, however, is not considered to affect the validity of testing the hypothesized theoretical relationships among the variables.

### Item Scales

The key variables were measured through composite item-scales constructed during a pilot study among 40 Koreans prior to the survey. In the pilot study, the ambiguity of wording and comprehensiveness of questions as well as the reliability of the measurement scales were checked. The construction and the internal consistency scores of the item-scales are as follows:

Perception of the Host: The degree of complexity in perceiving the host was measured through an open-ended question regarding similarities and differences between the nature of interpersonal relationships among Americans and Koreans. By definition, a cognitively complex person, compared with a cognitively simple person, has a greater number of dimensions-worth of information with which to comprehend differences among similar or adjacent objects in a cognitive domain (Bieri, 1955). Thus, a composite score (CMPLXTY) was generated from the statements given by the respondents by (1) the number of dimensions in similarities and differences (PERCEPT 1) and (2) the degree of elaboration and discrimination of individual and subgroup differences among Americans in interpersonal relationship patterns (PERCEPT 2). Inter-judge reliability scores between the two coders were .89 for PERCEPT 1 and .91 for PERCEPT 2 respectively.

Interpersonal Communication: An immigrant's involvement in interpersonal communication with members of the host society was measured by the volume and intensity of his informal and formal social relationships. It was assumed that such interpersonal relationship patterns indicate

the degree and quality of information an immigrant learns about the host society and its culture (Lazarsfeld & Merton, 1964). The four items used to assess interpersonal communication were: (1) number of casual American acquaintances one knows well enough to talk with when one happens to meet them, (2) number of American friends one meets in one another's homes, (3) number of intimate American friends with whom one can discuss his private and personal problems, and (4) number of American organizations one currently belongs to as a regular member. These four items were correlated highly with one another (Cronbach's Alpha = .81).

Since the respondent's estimations of his casual acquaintances, friends, and intimate friends can be subject to inaccuracy, a test-retest check was made over a two-week period during the pretest. When the actual number of relationships were transformed into 1 to 10 increasing levels, the test-retest reliability score for interpersonal communication measures were .91 (for casual acquaintances), .94 (for friends), and .97 (for intimate friends).

Mass Media Consumption: For scoring the immigrant's mass media consumption, the amount (or frequency) of exposure to American radio, TV, magazine, newspapers, and movies were measured. In addition, two items were added to assess their frequency of watching TV news and listening to radio news programs. On analyzing the data, it was found that, although all seven items correlated with one another positively, the information-oriented media items (newspaper and magazine reading and exposure to radio and TV news) were higher in their item-total correlation than the items on general entertainment-oriented media

use (overall radio and TV consumption and movie-going). At the same time, the four items higher in item-total correlation were stronger in their association with other variables in the path model, suggesting that an immigrant's exposure to entertainment-oriented media content is not as influential as his exposure to information-oriented media content in learning the host society.

Considering that the information-oriented media behaviors were more useful in studying the immigrant's acculturation process, only the four items were combined into a composite scale of the immigrant's mass media behavior for the present study (Cronbach's Alpha = .67).

English Competence: In assessing the immigrant's English competence, respondents were asked to estimate their own ability to speak and understand English (e.g., "Do you have any difficulty in understanding Americans when they speak?" "How much trouble do Americans seem to have in understanding you?" etc.). It was assumed that the immigrant's subjective evaluation and confidence was probably as influential on his communication behaviors as his actual command of the language. (See Selltiz, Christ, Havel & Cook, 1963, 124, for supportive argument.) Besides, the objective method of using judges to evaluate the immigrant's English could not be employed in the present study in which all the measurements were done by mail. The Cronbach's Alpha for the four items was .90.

Acculturation Motivation: The immigrant's acculturation motivation was measured by the three questions asking their level of interest and desire to learn the host norms and culture, in making friends with Americans, and in learning current events in the United States. For

the three items, Cronbach's Alpha was .52. The relatively low correlations among the items can perhaps be attributed to the difficulty of testing the complex psychological state through simple self-report questions. Distribution of responses on the four-point scales ("little," "a little," "somewhat," and "a lot") shows a skewness toward higher level of motivation, which suggests that an artifact of "social desirability" might have biased the responses. Nonetheless, the three items were considered to provide a reasonable basis, albeit probably not sensitive enough, from which the immigrant's acculturation motivation or, at least, the extent to which acculturation was considered socially desirable, could be estimated.

Channel Accessibility: Accessibility to interpersonal communication channels of the host society was measured by respondents' estimates of the percentage of American contacts out of total daily contacts provided by their living environment. Two items were used to measure interpersonal interaction potential ("Of all people you daily come in contact with, what percentage is with Americans?" and "In your present occupation, what percentage of the people you ordinarily come in contact with is with Americans?"). The two items correlated with each other by  $r = .49$  ( $p < .001$ ).

Accessibility to the American mass communication channels was measured by the availability of the American mass media at home. Since the data showed that radios and TVs were owned by virtually every household in the community (95.4% for radio and 97.5% for TV), only the availability of the print media (newspapers and magazines) discriminated among the respondents in terms of differential media availability. The

correlation coefficient  $r$  between the two items was .39 ( $p < .001$ ).

## RESULTS

The key variables, thus measured, were tested in relation to one another against the originally hypothesized propositions and the path model. Simple correlation, multiple regression, and path analysis were employed. All of the nine propositions and the path model were significantly supported by the data.

### Causal Factors and Intercultural Communication

The postulated effects of each of the three causal factors-- language competence (Propositions 1 & 2), acculturation motivation (Propositions 3 & 4), and channel accessibility (Propositions 5 & 6)-- on one's intercultural communication behaviors were all found to be significant. The zero-order correlation coefficients ( $r$ ) of each of the independent variables with the two dependent variables, i.e., interpersonal communication and mass media consumption, are reported in Table 1.

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(Insert Table 1 about here.)

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The simultaneous influence of the three causal factors on interpersonal and mass communication behaviors was determined by multiple-regression analysis. All three factors, when combined together, determined 29% of the total variation in interpersonal communication, and 58% in

Table 1

ZERO-ORDER CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN LANGUAGE,  
MOTIVATION, CHANNEL ACCESSIBILITY, AND INTERCULTURAL  
COMMUNICATION BEHAVIORS

|                             | Intercultural<br>Communication | Mass Media<br>Consumption |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Language<br>Competence      | .51                            | .60                       |
| Acculturation<br>Motivation | .23                            | .41                       |
| Channel<br>Accessibility*   | .38                            | .66                       |

\*Channel accessibility in relation to interpersonal communication was measured by interaction potential; in relation to mass media consumption, by mass media availability at home.

\*\*All correlation coefficients (r) are significant at the .001 level.

mass media consumption, indicating that an immigrant's information-oriented use of the host media is better explained by the three causal factors than his interpersonal communication behaviors. This is probably due to the fact that the process of interpersonal communication is generally more complex than that of mass communication. In interpersonal communication situation, interactants are psychologically involved with each other to a greater extent than when one watches TV or reads newspapers. Gregariousness, sociability, value orientations and many other personality and situational variables may affect the immigrant's interpersonal communication behaviors in addition to the three causal factors included in the study.

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 (Insert Table 2 about here.)  
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#### Intercultural Communication and Perception

Proposition 1, which relates the immigrant's interpersonal communication with members of the host society to perceptual complexity, was strongly supported by the data. The zero-order correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) between the two variables was .56 ( $p < .001$ ). This result shows that an immigrant's interpersonal communication explains 31% of the cognitive complexity. Proposition 2, regarding the effect of an immigrant's use of American mass media on his perceptual complexity, was also strongly supported by the data, with a correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) of .38 ( $p < .001$ ), explaining 14% of the cognitive complexity.

Table 2

MULTIPLE REGRESSION OF LANGUAGE, MOTIVATION, CHANNEL-  
ACCESSIBILITY ON INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION BEHAVIORS

(a) Dependent Variable: Interpersonal Communication

| Independent<br>Variable     | Simple<br>r | Multiple<br>r | Change in<br>r <sup>2</sup> |
|-----------------------------|-------------|---------------|-----------------------------|
| English<br>Competence       | .51*        | .26           | .26                         |
| Interaction<br>Potential    | .38*        | .53           | .02                         |
| Acculturation<br>Motivation | .23*        | .54           | .01                         |

(b) Dependent Variable: Mass Media Consumption

|                             |      |     |     |
|-----------------------------|------|-----|-----|
| Media<br>Availability       | .66* | .66 | .44 |
| English<br>Competence       | .60* | .69 | .04 |
| Acculturation<br>Motivation | .41* | .76 | .10 |

\* Correlation coefficients are significant at the  
.001 level.

The differential impact of interpersonal and mass communication experiences on perceptual complexity is interpreted as a reflection of the difference in intensity between the two communication experiences. While interpersonal communication experiences are generally intense, direct, and has a detailed influence on the immigrant's learning of the host society, mass media present more or less stereotypical picture of the host society due to the very nature of the mass communication process. Both interpersonal and mass communication behaviors simultaneously explained 34% of the total variation of the dependent variable (See Table 3).

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(Insert Table 3 about here.)

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#### The Path Model

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(Insert Figure 1 about here.)

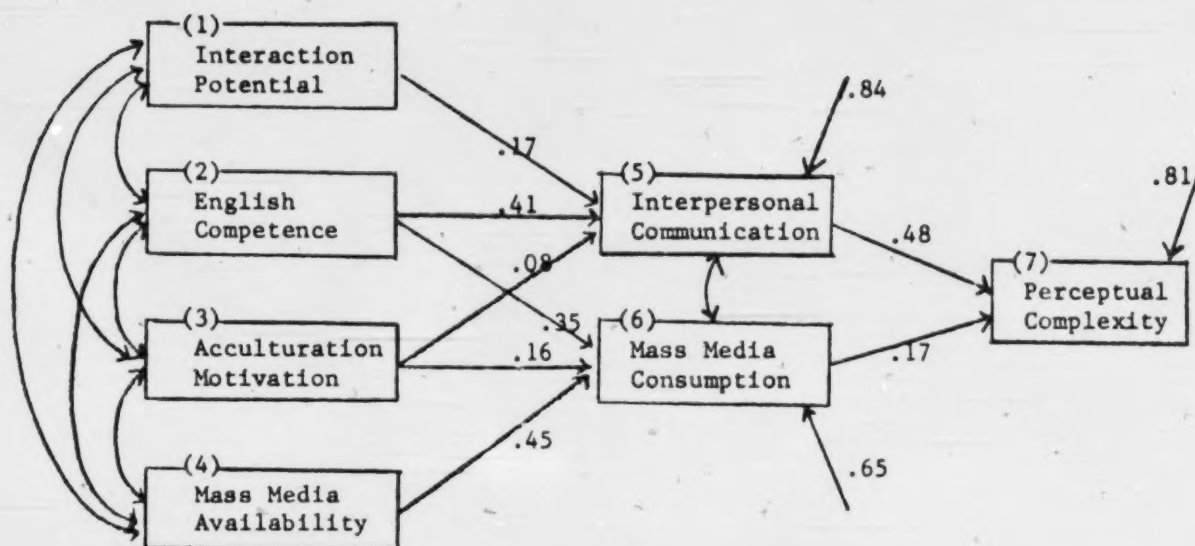
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Finally, the path model based on all nine propositions was examined. The path coefficients were represented by the ordinary, unstandardized regression coefficients (See Figure 1). In testing the goodness of fit of the model, all the effects that indirectly influenced the relationship between the exogenous variables ( $X_1$ ,  $X_2$ ,  $X_3$ , and  $X_4$ )

Table 3

MULTIPLE REGRESSION OF INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION  
AND MASS MEDIA USE ON PERCEPTUAL COMPLEXITY

| Independent<br>Variable        | Simple r<br>(p < ) | Multiple<br>r | Change in<br>r <sup>2</sup> |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|
| Interpersonal<br>Communication | .56<br>(.001)      | .56           | .31                         |
| Mass Media<br>Consumption      | .38<br>(.001)      | .58           | .03                         |



Zero-order correlation coefficients between variables:

|                |                |                |                |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| $r_{12} = .46$ | $r_{15} = .38$ | $r_{16} = .40$ | $r_{17} = .41$ |
| $r_{13} = .19$ | $r_{25} = .51$ | $r_{26} = .60$ | $r_{27} = .51$ |
| $r_{14} = .30$ | $r_{35} = .23$ | $r_{36} = .41$ | $r_{37} = .17$ |
| $r_{23} = .29$ | $r_{45} = .49$ | $r_{46} = .66$ | $r_{47} = .41$ |
| $r_{24} = .45$ |                | $r_{56} = .45$ | $r_{57} = .56$ |
| $r_{34} = .33$ |                |                | $r_{67} = .38$ |

Figure 1: PATH COEFFICIENTS AND ZERO-ORDER CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN VARIABLES IN THE PATH MODEL

and the ultimate endogenous variable ( $X_7$ ) through the two mediating communication variables ( $X_5$  and  $X_6$ ) were partialled out from the original correlation coefficients ( $r_{17}$ ,  $r_{27}$ ,  $r_{37}$ , and  $r_{47}$ ). As the result, the direct path coefficients all turned out to be close to zero and significantly reduced from the original correlation coefficients ( $P_{71} = .076$ ,  $P_{72} = -.002$ ,  $P_{73} = -.110$ , and  $P_{74} = .001$ ). This finding generally validates the underlying assumption in the path model, i.e., interpersonal and mass communication experiences mediate the effects of language competence, acculturation motivation, interaction potential, and media availability, in developing perceptual complexity.

Earlier in developing the path model, the relationship among the four exogenous variables were considered as given, with no hypothesized causal orders. The observed correlations among the four variables in Figure 1 might have been produced by some common causal variables outside of the present model. Assuming that the differences among immigrants in their communication patterns are partly a function of the length of time since immigration and factors operative before they immigrate, a few background variables were examined in relation to the four exogenous variables (See Table 4). The results show that, among other variables, educational background, sex, and the length of stay in the host society, are significantly related to all four exogenous variables. This analysis indicated that the male immigrants, who have higher educational background, and have stayed longer in the host society, tend to have greater access to host communication channels, more fluent in the host language, and higher in acculturation motivation. Also, age at the time of immigration was found to be another important factor that affects the immigrant's language competence. The younger an immigrant was at the time of immigration, the greater competence he developed in

the host language.

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(Insert Table 4 about here.)

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## DISCUSSION

The fundamental assumption in the present study was that communication behaviors are the central mechanism by which an immigrant develops better insights into his new environment. To provide an explanatory theory of the individual differences in communication patterns of the immigrants, nine propositions and the path model were tested and supported significantly. Some of the most important findings from the present study were:

1. Language fluency, acculturation motivation, and channel accessibility (interpersonal interaction potential and mass media availability) are major determinants of one's intercultural communication behaviors,
2. Educational background, sex, length of stay in the host society, and age at the time of immigration, are most important factors in predicting the immigrant's language competence, acculturation motivation, and accessibility to host communication channels,

Table 4

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS BETWEEN BACKGROUND VARIABLES  
AND FOUR EXOGENOUS VARIABLES (LANGUAGE, MOTIVATION,  
MEDIA AVAILABILITY, INTERACTION POTENTIAL)

|                    | English<br>Competence | Acculturation<br>Motivation | Media<br>Availability | Interaction<br>Potential |
|--------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Age at Immigration | -.30*                 | .02                         | -.16                  | -.12                     |
| Sex                | -.22*                 | .28*                        | .20*                  | -.18*                    |
| Education          | .49*                  | .39*                        | .40*                  | .25*                     |
| Length of Stay     | .50*                  | .22*                        | .38*                  | .26*                     |
| SES/Korea          | .09                   | .09                         | .10                   | .08                      |
| Occupation/Korea   | .10                   | .08                         | .06                   | .07                      |
| Urban/Rural        | .18                   | .14                         | .05                   | -.01                     |

\* Correlation coefficients (r) are significant at the .001 level.

3. The four exogenous variables do not affect one's cognitive complexity directly, but are mediated by the interpersonal and mass communication experiences in the host society, and
4. The influence of interpersonal communication is stronger than that of mass media consumption in developing complex and refined cognitive system in perceiving the host society.

In interpreting these findings, one needs to consider several limitations of the present theory. First, the path model describes and predicts one-way causality from the three causal factors to the perceptual complexity mediated by intercultural communication. In reality, however, reverse feedback effects might be observed. An immigrant's refined perception of the host society may subsequently affect his English fluency, acculturation motivation, and the communication environment by encouraging more active participation in intercultural communications within the host society. Such delayed feedback effects are not accurately reflected in the present model due to limitations in the data collection process. In order to test a non-recursive causal model in which delayed feedback components are incorporated, one needs to observe the same individuals more than once. In the present "one-shot" survey, the simplified model was employed as a reasonable approximation to the immigrant's communication process.

Second, the "causal" relationships connecting the key variables are not the causal in the strictest sense. As pointed out earlier, the exogenous variables -- language competence, acculturation motivation, interaction potential, and media availability -- do not exhaust all

possible causes for intercultural communication. Neither do the two communication variables (interpersonal communication and media consumption) completely explain the differential level of perceptual complexity. Here, the term "causal" has been used for a relationship in which a variable preceding the other is theoretically established as "explanatory" and the interrelationship between the two variables is fairly strong.

Acknowledging such limitations, however, it is believed that the study provides some meaningful implications in theoretical, methodological, and practical aspects of the acculturation process. Theoretically, the study strongly supports the existing view of communication as functional to the general acculturation process (Mendelsohn, 1964; Shibutani & Kwan, 1965; Peterson et al, 1965). The contribution of both interpersonal and mass communication experiences to the development of a refined and realistic perception and understanding of the host society was found to be significant. The findings also have an important bearing upon the cognitive theory (Schroder et al, 1967) which views a person's cognitive complexity as dependent upon developmental conditions. Considering the communication patterns of an immigrant as major bases of his acculturation experiences, the study provides empirical support to the theory in the context of foreign immigrant's acculturation.

Secondly, the study attempted to advance the existing findings that are limited to descriptions of the overt communication behaviors of foreign immigrants. Fluency in the host language, for example, has been commonly regarded to be related to intercultural communication and acculturation. What has not been examined in previous research, however, is to what extent language competence explains an immigrant's communication

behaviors and how an immigrant's communication behaviors can be even more powerfully predicted by the additional two factors--acculturation motivation and channel accessibility.

As a whole, the present study provides a theoretical framework from which systematic explanations of the communication patterns of immigrants can be derived. The theory is stated in specific testable propositions and has a broad range of possible applications to intergroup variations as well as intragroup variations of communication patterns across different ethnic communities. It not only explains individual differences but also offers an independent framework for ordering and predicting the degree of an immigrant's participation in intercultural communication and of the perceptual complexity. The specific coefficients of relationship reported earlier will not be the same for different groups and different situations of acculturation. However, the basic variables involved and the paths of causal influence in the present model should remain the same in most acculturation situation.

Methodologically, the multi-item scales developed and tested in the study provide some guidelines for future studies. It has been shown that the immigrant's exposure to the information-oriented contents of mass media (e.g., newspaper reading, magazine reading, listening to radio news, watching TV news) are more discriminating indicators of his acculturation in terms of developing better insights into the host society than the general consumption of radio and TV programs. The measurement of interpersonal relationships with members of the host society turned out to be more or less reliable and accurate measure of an immigrant's interpersonal communication involvement with the host society. Although an improvement should be made in measuring acculturation

motivation, most of the measures used in the present study are simple enough to be efficiently used in mail surveys. Since these measures do not require one to consider culture-specific characteristics (e.g., cultural values and norms), they can be easily adopted in developing scales for studies of other ethnic groups and cross-ethnic comparisons.

On a more practical level, the present study should be helpful to those who are concerned with the successful adjustment of first-generation immigrants. With respect to the host society, the customary goals are reducing the likelihood of prejudice or stereotype-based hostility on the part of immigrant groups and the development of integration mechanisms for facilitating their adjustment. The results of this study alert one to the importance of communication as a fundamental mechanism by which such goals can be better accomplished. With respect to the immigrants themselves, goals generally include attention to those factors which increase the likelihood of their making a satisfactory transition. To meet these goals, according to the findings in the present study, immigrants should develop their language competence, should attempt to motivate themselves to participate in the host society, and should make the host communication channels readily available in their everyday life. Once these conditions are met, the immigrants can participate in intercultural communication more actively, which will help them develop more realistic and refined knowledge of the new environment. Ultimately, such better understanding of the host society will produce better psychological well-being.

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